



# PRESS RELEASE

USS KITTY HAWK (CV 63)  
Public Affairs Office  
FPO AP 96634-2770



E-mail: [pao@kitty-hawk.navy.mil](mailto:pao@kitty-hawk.navy.mil)  
Web: [www.kittyhawk.navy.mil](http://www.kittyhawk.navy.mil)

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## VFA-27 Sailor sings his faith on CD

By Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Matthew Reinhardt, Kitty Hawk public affairs

**USS KITTY HAWK, At Sea** – Lt. j.g. Christopher Verdell has been singing gospel to praise God almost all his life. Recently his efforts were noticed by a gospel record label while recording his first album.

Verdell, Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 27's administrative officer, said he's been singing since age 6, learning from his father, a pastor, who sang with a church's choir.

"My father had a gospel quartet while I was growing up," said Verdell, who is deployed aboard USS Kitty Hawk (CV 63) from Naval Air Facility Atsugi, Japan. "They were good enough to perform with almost all the great names at the time like the Canton Spirituals, Mighty Clouds of Joy, Lee Williams and the Highway QCs, and the William Brothers. Singing has always been a family thing for me," said Verdell. "I have four sisters who are all very talented also."

Now 30, Verdell has been in the Navy for 12 years, and is negotiating a contract with Tokyo's Gospel Music Academy after recording his first album, "Direction." The recording process took more than six months, but writing the songs took much longer, he said.

"How long it takes me to write a song depends on how inspired I am," he said. "Some took me 30 minutes, and some of the songs on my CD I've been working on since I was junior enlisted."

The CD took quite a while to finish, but once he started, it wasn't too difficult to get the whole thing done.

"One of my Japanese friends owns a studio, so we recorded, then there was mixing and mastering," said Verdell.

After some of his songs were finished, Verdell said he posted a few on the internet in a private Web site for certain producers and distributors who were interested in his music.

Then, Verdell said his list of contacts continued to grow, including the president of Hosanna Records, professional DJs, and executive members of the Gospel Music Academy.

Verdell said his CD should be released around Christmas, and the initial distribution will be a few thousand copies.

“I’m not surprised at all that [Verdell’s] putting out a CD, I always knew he had talent. Finally someone else realized it,” said Chief Yeoman (AW) Demont Kinchen, admin leading chief petty officer for VFA-27.

“My success was just a lot of people who knew a lot of people,” said Verdell. “I don’t think it’s happenstance though, I think it was all orchestrated by God.”

Kinchen said he’s known Verdell for almost six years, worked with him for two and a half years, and has seen him perform multiple times both at church and concerts.

“He’s a great leader,” said Kinchen. “He has great forward-thinking skills and a genuine concern for others.”

Kinchen said he’s listened to Verdell’s album and says it’s truly inspirational and heartfelt.

“I like to write from my heart,” said Verdell. “I write songs about daily living, things we all go through.”

Verdell said he’s been fortunate enough to sing with Japanese gospel star Yuka Kamibuchi and with other great gospel singers in Japan.

“Gospel music is what I really love,” he said. “It’s what I feel. I tried blues and R&B but I always ended up coming back to gospel.”

Verdell’s two children, Christopher Jr., 7, and Zaria, 4, sing with his church’s children’s choir.

“I haven’t heard the children’s choir yet, but I’m eager to get back and see how they sound,” he said. “My wife recorded their first performance. I’ll be able to listen to it when I get home.”

Verdell said he performs at the Community Christian Fellowship church in Atsugi every Sunday with the church’s praise team.

He said he also sings around the office.

“He’s a great singer, but sometimes we have to tell him to stop and be quiet,” said Kinchen.

Verdell also performs workshops twice a week while in port, traveling around Japan to perform.

The Kitty Hawk Strike Group is the largest carrier strike group in the Navy. It includes the Kitty Hawk, the aircraft squadrons and staff of Carrier Air Wing 5, the guided-missile cruisers USS Shiloh (CG 67) and USS Cowpens (CG 63), and Destroyer Squadron 15 staff. The group’s ships and destroyer squadron staff operate from Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Japan, and the air wing and staff operate from NAF Atsugi.

To find more news about the Kitty Hawk Strike Group, visit the Navy NewsStand at [www.news.navy.mil/local/cv63/](http://www.news.navy.mil/local/cv63/).

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